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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: August 17, 1956

SUBJECT: Coordination of British and American Military and Economic Aid to Libya.

PARTICIPANTS: J. E. Coulson, Minister Counselor of British Embassy
J. R. A. Bottomley, First Secretary of British Embassy
NEA - George V. Allen
NEA - Eli Stevens
AF - Leo G. Cyr
AF - Clifford Finch

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY J. M. Ray DATE 5/6/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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Mr. Coulson asked if we had any further information regarding the earlier British request (their Aide Memoire of July 19) that we consider training a Libyan Air Force. Mr. Allen replied that we had little new to contribute and that the matter was still being studied by the Defense Department. Mr. Allen asked Mr. Coulson if the British had training facilities in Libya which could be used for a possible Libyan Air Force. Neither Mr. Coulson nor Mr. Bottomley had certain knowledge as to whether the British had an air base in Libya but thought they had such a base near Benghazi. Mr. Cyr said that the British had two base facilities in Libya, one near Derna and one at Idris Field (formerly Castel Benito). Mr. Allen said that Libyan cadets might be trained either at Wheelus Air Base or at a British Air Base. Mr. Cyr stated that there were a number of old air strips which could be repaired to make them adequate for training planes.

Mr. Coulson said that, in any case, [redacted] possibly

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Mr. Coulson asked what new information we could provide with regard to specific measures to be taken to improve economic coordination. Mr. Finch said that our Ambassador had great hopes that the new Development Council would prove to be a successful mechanism to improve economic coordination with the British as well as with other countries contributing economic aid funds to Libya. Mr. Finch said that Mr. Tappin approves of the idea of an Anglo-American meeting to attempt to effect better coordination. Mr. Tappin desires an open, not a secret, meeting, and one which would, ideally, include the Libyans. Mr. Cyr stated that the creation of the Libyan American Reconstruction Commission was necessary although there already existed the Libyan Public Development and Stabilization Fund, because Treasury regulations make it necessary to have a more direct control over American aid funds. Mr. Coulson stated that such a circumstance was just a fact of life with which we would have to live.

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